



**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Policy 1648.11 The Road Forward - District Plan for Safe Return  
2021-2022 School Year**

**Appendix C – Mask Wearing Protocol**

Union County Educational Services Commission readily acknowledges that universal and consistent use of face coverings is an important health and safety strategy to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

UCESC requires all teachers, staff, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, to wear an appropriate face covering while indoors in any school, building, office and/or transportation vehicle until further notice. Teachers, staff, students, and visitors who are participating in mask breaks, physical education and/or recess outside of the school building will not be required to wear masks. In addition, staff who are alone in a classroom or office are not required to wear masks.

The Commission will continue to consult with local health officials in order to determine the appropriate time to make revisions to this protocol.

**Guidelines for Mask Wearing**

- Face coverings may be homemade, purchased cloth, or disposable masks.
- A multi-ply, tightly woven cotton cloth or multi-ply disposable face covering is recommended.
- Bandanas, neck gaiters, masks with exhalation valves or vents, or face coverings with printed images and/or text deemed inappropriate to the educational environment will not be permitted.
- Clear face shields cannot be used as a substitute for face coverings and may be worn only as a supplement to cloth or paper face coverings.
- Cloth face coverings with a clear “window” over the mouth are an acceptable alternative, particularly for teaching staff members assigned to work with students with disabilities.
- Disposable single use masks will be available for students and staff who forget to bring a face covering or whose face covering becomes wet or soiled while at school.
- Special personal protective equipment, including face shields and KN-95 filtration masks, will be provided to staff assigned to work with students in close contact and/or students who are unable to consistently wear face coverings or maintain recommended social distance.
- Parents and/or Guardians are responsible for supplying daily face coverings for students and will be asked to send a minimum of one extra face covering to remain in school.
- No disciplinary action will be taken against a student who does not have a face covering.
- Administrators will incorporate opportunities for students and staff to take short “fresh air” breaks periodically throughout the day to the greatest extent possible and practical.
- School Nurses and other relevant education staff will provide training for students and staff on the safe and effective use of face coverings on an ongoing basis.

## **Exceptions to Mask Wearing Requirements:**

UCESC acknowledges that wearing face coverings consistently throughout the school day may present a challenge for some students, including young children and individuals with disabilities.

Students in Special Education schools and programs will be encouraged to wear face coverings at all times, to the greatest extent possible and practical, and teaching staff will identify positive strategies to promote and reinforce students for consistent use of face coverings while in school.

Additional exemptions to district masking protocols will be considered for the following reasons:

- When an underlying medical condition contributes to difficulty breathing or imposes any other physical limitation that may introduce a safety concern when wearing a face covering;
- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance;
- When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan, precludes use of a face covering;
- When a child is under two (2) years of age;
- When a student is engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering;
- When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

Parents seeking exemptions in wearing face coverings are required to submit relevant medical documentation to the School Nurse for consideration of appropriate adaptations and alternatives.

Staff seeking exemptions in wearing face coverings are required to submit relevant medical documentation to the Superintendent's Office for consideration of reasonable workplace accommodations.